

**Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board  
Family Support and Literacy Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
February 24, 2014**

The Regular Meeting of the First Things First – Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board, Family Support and Literacy Advisory Committee was held on February 24, 2014 at the First Things First Board Room, 4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, Arizona 85012.

**Members Present:** Irma Marques, Holly Henley, Gabriella Parra, Irene Burnton, Terri Clark, Marilee Dal Pra, Colleen Day Mach, Carol Lopinski, Detza VanBogaert (9:15) and Suzanne Schunk (10:30)

**Members Participating by Phone:** Christine Niven and Chris Linn

**Guests:** Rhonda Coates

**FTF Staff:** Dr. Aaliyah Samuel, Karen Woodhouse, Christine Bach, Stephanie Willis, Ginger Sandweg, Dr. Karen Peifer, Dr. Lisa Colling, Karen Yearwood

**Call to Order and Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. with a welcome and call for introductions.

Dr. Samuel announced the passing of Beverly Russell, Sr. Director for Tribal Affairs, and observed a moment of silence.

**Consent Agenda**

Co-Chair Day Mach called for a motion to accept the minutes of the October 17, 2013 meeting. Member Burnton moved to accept and Member Lopinski seconded. All were in favor and motion passed.

**Family Support and Literacy Update**

Dr. Samuel announced that the Family Support and Literacy Team are fully staffed and announced Stephanie Willis has been promoted to the position of Sr. Specialist and Christine Back is the new Quality Assurance Specialist.

Dr. Samuel recognized Rhonda Coates from the new Division of Child and Family Services.

The Family Support and Literacy (FS&L) Team has reviewed and identified the Standards of Practice (SOPs) that need to be revised for the next 3 year funding cycle (SFY16-18) and they are working with Regional staff for feedback on challenges and successes they've experienced in working with the SOPs and how better to provide supports to Families. Stephanie Willis will be forming sub-committees of internal FS&L Implementation Team Members. One will be focused on Community Based Training strategies which are anticipated to have major revisions. We will also focus on Parent Outreach and Awareness to see how these two areas emphasize the work of the other. First Things First (FTF) is steering away from funding strategies that focus on only one area as we move towards a more comprehensive system across goal areas. Another sub-committee will work on Home Based strategies. Our timeline for all revisions is very ambitious and we'll be starting in February and will end in June. Dr. Samuel will provide updates to this Advisory Committee on the revisions. Member Lopinski questioned if FTF has considered working with the Maricopa Family Support Alliance which collaborates with approximately 45 agencies to provide trainings in the field of Family Support and Literacy. The Maricopa Family Support Alliance is adapting the California National Standards and one item that's on our radar is that the standards were Maricopa County specific and not national. Member Schunk replied that it is primarily focused on Maricopa County but can be used as a National Model. Dr. Samuel and Ms. Willis will review these standards and will incorporate into the SOPs as is fitting. Co-Chair Dal Pra recognized the great work being done by the Family Support and Literacy Team and appreciates how outside partners are being kept informed.

**State Wide Literacy Update**

Member Clark provided an update on Read On Arizona. They are now working on strategies at State and local levels with 13 communities now engaged. The newest communities are Cochise and Santa Cruz counties. There are seven communities in Maricopa and there are five to six others in development. All Read On Arizona strategies focus on early learning for children ages 0-8. Member Clark announced that they are going into the second printing of the Early Learning Guide and asked if the Advisory Committee Members were interested in placing a bundled order to contact her. The guides will cost approximately 8-10 cents per Guide.

Work on the Phase Two Learning Collaborative has started. Wednesday there will be a meeting at the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Foundation to discuss the "Move On When Ready" 3<sup>rd</sup> grade retention plan. The first steps of the retention plan will possibly start this year with current 3<sup>rd</sup> graders being retained based on their AIMS results. The discussion is moving forwards and there may be a moratorium next year that will include the retention plan but will not be formally adopted Statewide.

## **Statewide Systems Approach Framework**

Dr. Samuel announced that since the last Advisory Committee meeting, First Things First (FTF) held internal discussions on collaborative work within the FTF goal areas and we're looking at leveraging our resources for maximum results across the goal areas. We've also discussed how to saturate Families with information on services available across goal areas.

Dr. Peifer spoke on the comprehensive assessment system work as part of the Race To The Top grant application and provided a copy of a matrix to best describe what we anticipate the system would look like. It will include a child level assessment and an environmental assessment. The child level looks at the whole system, from birth which includes tests and screenings, periodic screenings, etc. We're looking at family support screenings like Home Visiting and Family Resource Center screenings and compare them to the early learning programs like the Infant Toddler programs and preschool screenings and we're trying to get the systems to "talk together". The Intervening Early Opportunity Assessment by Dr. Charlie Bruner has been referenced for this work. Dr. Peifer announced that First Things First received the Early Childhood Systems (ECCS) grant and we specifically chose to focus on toxic stress and early intervention and caring for child standards as well as the early intervention system. Part of this work is in wanting to identify a common screening tool to be used and we're moving towards non-duplicative data.

Member Burnton commented that as First Things First (FTF) talks about this work, keep in mind that we become part of an integrated system FTF needs to include all kids beyond FTF funded programs. Dr. Peifer agreed and noted that this is where it's heading. Co-Chair Dal Pra questioned how FTF is obtaining collective agreement in defining these comprehensive agreements and Dr. Peifer responded that it is part of what the ECCS grant work is helping to accomplish. Member Lopinski asked that FTF include providers in the process so they can give a realistic response on what they can do.

Member VanBogaert inquired as to whether FTF is having conversations with AHCCCS as the tools are being developed to include the health component. Dr. Peifer reported that they are in communications with AHCCCS and that Kim Elliott is helping with this part of the work. Member Schunk worries that we keep talking about coordinated care and not duplicating work but we continually run into these problems within work in keeping family involved and it can be overwhelming to the families. We need to look at what it is everyone needs to know about what actually helps the families. This would help providers who are not medical people, to know what it is you are trying to identify with the tools being created. Dr. Peifer noted that we are working on how to collect as much data as possible but need to be careful in not overstepping the HIPPA and FERPA rules. Dr. Samuel announced that this work is being vetted through many Committees and a collective process is being used in building this system. We can't talk of only one piece of the system, we have to talk about all areas which mesh into each other.

For example, Ginger Sandweg discussed how we assist in maintaining quality standards. We have a piece of Quality First (QF) that talks to health items in their programs, what policies are in place around sick children and preventing illness. And the family support component within QF and how to involve families in the QF program and in providing training for families on how to assess their children. We have early learning, health and family support component in QF and we're working at improvement in all areas. We also discuss if the providers know of the other programs like the home visiting programs, do they have information on the Parent Kits and how do we get information on scholarships out to the families. First Things First has created the [www.QualityFirstAZ.com](http://www.QualityFirstAZ.com) website to help provide this information.

Dr. Samuel asked the Advisory Committee to consider if we are really inclusive of literacy within family support. It seems that literacy is an appendage to family support and we're looking at how to better infuse early literacy into the other goal areas. We're leaning heavily on our partnership with Read On Arizona to guide our work in this area and Member Clark has worked diligently in creating a 0-8 Framework. With all the changes in the K-3 world, we can't ignore our role in this early literacy system. The Continuum of Effective Practices is still being developed and there will be a meeting next month to finish this up and roll out a draft by Fall/late Summer.

Dr. Samuel announced that First Things First is working on our evaluation plan. The National Panel recommendations will guide this work on how we're assessing our data and how to use the data to inform our work. First Things First also completes a study of Regional data to look at home visiting and family resource center programs data. Results from these studies are in and we're looking at this information to help guide and inform our work.

Parent Kits are being discussed as to what revisions can be made. Parent Kits are a wealth of resources for new parents, and it includes literature, DVDs, a resource guide and board book to encourage literacy from the start. Over \$1.5 million dollars goes into funding the Parent Kits. Through this re-vamp, we are working with Susan Fry on what information is relevant and should be included. For example, information on safe sleep will be included as will oral health information. Updates need to be comprehensive but not so detailed that families are overwhelmed. Data received shows a large group of Mothers are overwhelmed when going home with a new baby and so the kit cannot be too cumbersome for their use. We're discussing the need to reach out and distribute the Parent Kits through obstetrician offices when Mothers first start their visits so they have time to review the materials. We're also looking at utilizing Home Visitors to market the Parent Kits. First Things First (FTF) is also working on having a Face Book post but we're having a challenge with the copy rights as US Berkeley holds the copy rights. UC Berkeley will be hosting focus groups with states that use the Parent Kits and FTF will be assisting with the focus groups in Arizona. Revisions also need to be made to the DVDs as they have older actors no longer relevant to the mainstream which families may not be able to identify with.

Many homes also don't have DVD players anymore as they're only streaming their entertainment programs. The Parents Action Alliance and UC Berkeley are taking this all into consideration. Member Lynne reported that the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) has a guide they use as a supplement to the Parent Kit and this was led by Vicki French of Raising Kids with Special Needs. NICU families are likened to patients with PTSD. Member Burnton is glad to hear this community is being included and asked that she be informed how she can help link Home Visitors with NICU families in their community. They have health Nurses who can be a resource through home visiting network. Member Schunk suggested that every Home Visitor Supervisor be giving a Parent Kit.

#### **Future Work and Next Steps**

Dr. Samuel introduced Karen Yearwood, Sr. Director for the Phoenix North Regional Partnership Council.

Dr. Samuel announced that the search for a new Chief Executive Officer for First Things First was on track and the hope is to have someone selected by the summer.

The Regional Partnership Councils are currently recruiting members for the upcoming terms and those interested can refer to the First Things First website for more information.

The Early Childhood Summit is fast approaching and calls for presentations are due at the end of the week.

Member Burnton announced that the "Adverse Early Childhood Experiences" report will be released on March 4, 2014 and there will be a formal press conference and panel discussion held by the Arizona Department of Health Services. Member Burnton will forward logistical information to Dr. Samuel for distribution.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:40 a.m.